

TOURIST SIGNAGE PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

The Tourist Signage Programs were established to benefit the traveling motorists by providing directional guidance to attractions, while improving local economies through increased tourism. Signage is an integral part of Kentucky's transportation system, with a primary purpose of guiding motorists to the desired destinations safely and effectively. The programs provide a means for local governments to productively utilize the state's highway network to encourage motorists to visit their communities.

Signs for tourist attractions are installed along Kentucky's interstates, parkways, and other controlled access roadways through the Limited Supplemental Guide Sign (LSGS) Program. These attractions must contribute significantly to the state's tourism efforts and demonstrate strong regional support. Post-interchange guide signs are included in the LSGS Program. Signs are installed along conventional highways for tourist attractions of local and regional interest through the Cultural & Recreational (C&R) Guide Sign Program; local governments are encouraged to prepare comprehensive way-finding signage plans to improve tourism in their community.

Local government agencies may apply for the Tourist Signage Programs. Historically, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) and Tourist Commissions have effectively prepared signage proposals through identifying the needs of the community, while working cooperatively with the County Judge/Executive's and City Mayor's Offices. Signage proposals are to serve a public purpose through increased tourism, economic development, and improved traffic control.

The government sponsor is responsible for soliciting public support prior to submitting the signage proposal. Also, the sponsor is responsible for obtaining required funds or making payment arrangements with individual attractions for the cost of signage. Attractions must meet the eligibility requirements; sponsors must ensure this and collect necessary documentation. The sponsor is required to make all arrangements for long-term maintenance and identify ongoing tourist sign needs.

The KAR & KRS links shown below are provided for your information and will provide additional information related to the various tourism signing programs.

603 KAR 4:050. Limited Supplemental Guide Signs

603 KAR 4:045. Cultural & Recreational Guide Signs

ELIGIBILITY & AVAILABILITY

An attraction must fall into one of the eligible categories to qualify for participation in the Tourist Signage Programs.

Eligible Categories:

- Cultural
- Historical
- Recreational
- Agricultural
- Educational
- Entertainment

Attraction Eligibility

Each attraction shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws including those prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin. Requirements outlined in Kentucky Revised Statutes KRS 177.076-177.078 and Kentucky Administrative Regulations 603 KAR 4:045-4:050 must be adhered to for eligibility. If an attraction is in noncompliance of any of these laws or guidelines, it may be considered ineligible for participation in the programs. Approval will not be granted if the attraction is using an illegal sign at any location in the state.

Attractions are eligible for signage through the LSGS Program if they are located within 50 miles of the exit. The attraction must be within 20 miles of the intersection to be eligible for C&R signage, or up to 50 miles if there is a corresponding Limited Supplemental Guide Sign.

An attraction shall meet the following requirements to be eligible for participation in the Programs:

- The attraction shall be open to the general public during regular and reasonable hours, and not by appointment or reservation only.
- The attraction shall be open a minimum of eight (8) hours a day, five (5) days a week, one (1) of which is a weekend.
- The activities shall be conducted in an appropriate building or area, and not in a building principally used as a residence unless there is a convenient, separate, and well-marked entrance.
- The facilities must be maintained in a manner consistent with standards generally accepted for that type of activity.
- The attraction must maintain adequate parking on site or nearby the facility.
- To be eligible for the LSGS Program, the attraction must be a destination where out-of-town visitors would stay overnight in commercial lodging near the tourism area.
- The attraction shall have a documented annual attendance exceeding 75,000 visitors in the Lexington or Louisville areas, or 10,000 annual visitors in other areas of the state.
- Historical attractions must have a minimum 5,000 annual visitors.

There are no minimum visitor attendance requirements for an attraction to be eligible for the C&R Program. Ineligible attractions include: gas, food, lodging (including bed and breakfasts), and retail facilities. Temporary attractions are not eligible for the LSGS Program.

Family Entertainment Centers

- A family entertainment center is eligible if the facilities contain a minimum of fifty thousand (50,000) square feet of building space and are located on property encompassing at least five (5) acres adjacent or complementary to a cultural, recreational, or entertainment facility, or natural recreational area.
- Family entertainment centers shall provide a variety of entertainment and leisure options, and at least sixty percent (60%) of the developed property must be devoted to entertainment and food options.
- The facilities must contain at least one (1) restaurant and two (2) additional venues including but not limited to: live entertainment, concert halls, museums, zoos, or other cultural, recreational or leisure activities.
- Stand alone shopping centers are not an eligible attraction.

Temporary Agritourism Attraction Eligibility

To be eligible for participation in the Cultural & Recreational Guide Sign Program, temporary agritourism attractions shall be open a minimum of six (6) hours a day, five (5) days a week, one (1) of which is a weekend. The attraction shall be open to the general public and not by appointment or reservation only. The attraction shall be conducted in an appropriate building or area, which shall be maintained in a manner consistent with standards generally accepted for that type of activity. The attraction shall maintain off-road parking on-site or nearby the facilities at a minimum.

Ineligible attractions include: gas, food, lodging (including bed and breakfasts), and retail facilities. Temporary agritourism attractions are not eligible for participation in the Limited Supplemental Guide Sign Program.

Availability

The terrain and existence of regulatory signs may not allow for tourist signs to be installed.

Signs are to be installed through the LSGS Program prior to the exit of the most direct route to the attraction. Federal guidelines limit the number and spacing of Limited Supplemental Guide Signs installed along Kentucky's highway system. Signs erected along interstates and parkways must be spaced a minimum of 800 feet apart. No more than 2 supplemental guide signs are allowed at each exit per direction, and each sign may have up to 2 messages. Post-interchange guide signs are to be installed 20 and 10 miles in advance of the exit, and require an existing LSG sign at the exit.

Signs installed through the Cultural & Recreational Guide Sign Program must have a minimum of 200 feet between each sign or other traffic control devices. Up to 4 sign panels may be installed on each sign assembly, and up to 2 assemblies per direction are allowed at each intersection.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Government sponsors must complete requirements from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to be eligible for signage.

Proposal Submittal Requirements

The sponsor is to submit the original proposal stapled or bound in a folder. The sponsor is to keep at least one copy for its use. The following documents shall be included:

- Tourist Signage Program Application(s) - This includes the Program application (TC 20-28) and Attraction Eligibility application (TC 20-28a). These can be obtained by visiting the Permits Branch website at www.kentucky.gov.
- Separate Attraction Eligibility applications shall be submitted for each individual attraction.
- Signing Incentives Program application* signed by Sponsor (TC 20-29) (if applicable)
- Sponsor shall clearly identify any past or present Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects that would be eligible for signage. If no TE projects have occurred but the attraction should be eligible, a detailed description of the activities and justification for eligibility is required. By signing the Signing Incentives Program application the sponsor is responsible for ensuring the project is maintained in perpetuity and in accordance with TE Program requirements.
- Evidence of Community Support - The sponsor must provide evidence of community and regional support, such as letters and/or resolutions from County, City, and regional officials.

Limited Supplemental Guide Sign Program additional requirements

- Verification of Visitor Attendance - The sponsor must provide adequate documentation that the attraction meets the minimum visitor requirements. All numbers must be accurate and verifiable. Acceptable methods of verifying annual visitor attendance are through review of annual ticket sales, attendance verified by turnstiles or hand count, annual events that bring in documented verifiable totals, or log books. Other methods must be approved in advance of proposal submittal.
- Application Payment - Sponsor shall submit a check for \$200 per attraction requesting LSG signs made out to the Kentucky State Treasurer to cover administrative costs. This is not refundable, but will count towards the cost of the signage if the attraction is approved for participation in the Signage Incentives Program.

Cultural & Recreational Guide Sign Program additional requirements

- Department of Highways Encroachment Permit application (TC 99-1E) Encroachment permit applications shall be signed by the Mayor for all requested sign locations on state routes within city limits. Encroachment permit applications shall be signed by the County Judge/Executive for all requested sign locations on state routes outside city limits. Separate encroachment permits

shall be submitted if necessary. The County Fiscal Court or City Council may pass a resolution authorizing the sponsor (such as Director of the Tourism Commission) to sign on their behalf.

- Consent and Release Forms - Signs to be installed on private property along with the signage proposal must have a signed consent and release form from the property owner. The private property owner must explicitly allow the sponsor to erect and be responsible for any signs on their property and hold harmless the Cabinet for any incidents that may occur.
- Temporary Agritourism Site application* along with proof of general liability insurance. The application will be forwarded to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture for review by the Agritourism Advisory Council. This form is not required of agritourism attractions that meet the general eligibility requirements (8 hours per day, 5 days a week, and adequate on-site parking).
- Maps designating attractions and sign locations - An area map should be provided showing the attraction and sign locations. Smaller scaled maps should be submitted to review any downtown or urbanized area.

(*If applicable)

Proposals must be legible and complete. Incomplete proposals will be returned to the sponsor. Signage proposals shall be submitted to:

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Division of Maintenance – Permits Branch
200 Mero Street, 3rd Floor East
Frankfort, KY 40622

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed to assure adherence to the guidelines. If the sponsor has included an application for the Signing Incentives Program, the eligibility for funds will be determined.

If the proposal is acceptable, personnel from the Divisions of Traffic and Maintenance shall conduct a review of whether sufficient space is available on the roadway for the sign.

The Attraction Eligibility and Signing Incentives Program (if applicable) applications will be forwarded to the Transportation Tourism Interagency Committee (TTIC), which consists of 6 members from Transportation, 6 members from Tourism, and a representative from the Kentucky Heritage Council. These meetings are open to the public, and the government sponsor shall be advised of any hearings through public meeting notices or direct correspondence. The TTIC shall review the applications and make a recommendation for approval or denial.

If the proposal includes C&R signs, the Encroachment Permit application is forwarded to the appropriate District office for review by engineers in the Permits and Traffic Branches. They shall review the requested locations for adherence to encroachment permit requirements, and if acceptable the Executive Director of the District office will approve the permit. Two copies of the permit will be sent to the sponsor, and a copy will be provided to the program coordinator.

If the attraction is determined to be eligible for the Signing Incentives Program, a cost estimate is provided to the Transportation Tourism Interagency Committee for review and approval.

If the sponsor has included an application for a Temporary Agritourism Site, the application will be forwarded to the Department of Agriculture to be reviewed by the Agritourism Advisory Council. The Department of Agriculture will advise OSP when the application is approved or denied.

The sponsor will be notified in writing of the approval or denial based on recommendations from the Department of Highways, TTIC, and Agritourism Advisory Council for.

FINANCIAL

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet currently offers statewide contractors to install signs at competitive rates. A cost estimate can be provided at the sponsor's request to determine the most cost effective method. If the sponsor elects to utilize the KYTC Contractor, the signs will be fabricated and installed. Once the signs have been inspected, the sponsor will be billed for the cost of the signs and installation. The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign.

If the sponsor has been approved for participation in the Signing Incentives Program and utilizes the KYTC Contractor, the sponsor will be billed its portion of the cost of the signs. The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign. If the sponsor does not maintain the sign in perpetuity or the attraction becomes ineligible, the sponsor will be required to repay the federal funds used for initial fabrication and installation if the sign is removed.

Limited Supplemental Guide Signs (L.S.G.S.)

The Cabinet shall enter into a contractual agreement with the sponsor prior to the work order being released to begin fabrication of the sign. For each sign, the sponsor is responsible for the first \$5000 per message. The Department of Highways will cover the additional costs. The sponsor may enter into an agreement with the individual attractions to outline who is responsible for payment of the sign, however, all correspondence and contracts will be with the government sponsor. The sponsor will be billed once the signs have been inspected. The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign.

If approved for participation in the Signing Incentives Program, the sponsor will be billed 20% of the cost of sign fabrication and installation. The sponsor must maintain the sign in perpetuity for the public good. If the attraction becomes ineligible and the sign is subsequently removed, the sponsor will be required to repay the federal funds used for sign erection and installation.

Post Interchange Distance Signs (P.I.D.S.)

Sponsors are responsible for the entire cost of Post-interchange guide signs.

Cultural and Recreational Guide Signs (C&R)

The cost of sign fabrication, erection, and maintenance is the responsibility of the government sponsor. The sponsor may enter into an agreement with the individual attractions to outline who is responsible for payment of the sign, however, all correspondence and contracts will be with the government sponsor.

If the sponsor has been approved for participation in the Signing Incentives Program, the cost estimate must be approved before work may begin. All Transportation Enhancement requirements must be followed, including adherence to Model Procurement Codes. The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign. If the sponsor does not maintain the sign in perpetuity or the attraction becomes ineligible, the sponsor will be required to repay the federal funds used for initial fabrication and installation if the sign is removed.

Signing Incentives Program

The Commerce Cabinet has secured federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to assist local governments with the cost of tourist sign fabrication and installation. Through the Signing Incentives Program, TE funds may provide up to 80% of the cost of fabrication and installation.

To be eligible for the Program, an attraction must either provide documentation of previous or current TE Project or meet all the criteria set forth in the TE Program. To be eligible, the attraction must establish a relationship to surface transportation and meet the criteria of at least one of 12 eligible categories. The Office of Special Programs will determine whether an attraction is eligible, and may consult with the Kentucky Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Additional information on the TE Program can be found by visiting www.tea21.ky.gov.

The Signing Incentives Program funds are administered by the Transportation Tourism Interagency Committee.

Sponsors may not apply for the Signing Incentives Program for maintenance activities.

Property Management

Any attraction which operates on a seasonal basis or is closed in excess of thirty (30) days shall make provisions to remove or cover the attraction's sign during the off season. The Department of Highways District Office shall be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days before the opening or closing occurs and proper arrangements made to remove or cover the sign or signs. Failure to provide sufficient notification may result in attraction becoming ineligible due to not maintaining regular and reasonable hours of operation, and sign will be removed. The sponsor may be required to pay labor costs of sign removal or covering.

The OSP may conduct continuing eligibility reviews. Any attraction not in compliance with state and federal laws and guidelines will be considered ineligible and existing signs will be removed at the cost of the sponsor.

FABRICATION, INSTALLATION, & MAINTENANCE

Limited Supplemental Guide Signs are installed by the Cabinet's statewide contractor. The signs should be installed within 4 months from date of contract execution if trailblazing signs are in place. The government sponsor will be billed following inspection of the sign, and may elect to pay \$500 per sign per year for a period of 10 years, or the entire cost of the signs amortized over a period of 10 years.

The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign(s), and will be required to pay all associated costs. This includes but is not limited to removal or replacement of faded or dilapidated signs, or necessary repairs due to collisions.

The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the attractions remain in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. This includes eligibility based on hours of operation, appropriate facilities for the activity, etc.

Cultural & Recreational Guide Signs

The KYTC currently offers statewide contractors to install signs at competitive rates. These signs are installed using Type I posts in concrete with a Type "D" break-a-way system. This installation method ensures that the sign will require reduced maintenance and assists in the uniformity of these type signs across the state.

Government sponsors may elect to utilize an outside contractor or city/county forces to fabricate and install the signs. If the sponsor chooses this method, their contractor must follow all guidelines included in the C&R Specifications Manual for materials and installation methods. The approved encroachment permit requires the same requirements be met.

Maintenance

The sponsor is responsible for maintenance of the sign. This includes but is not limited to removal or replacement of faded or dilapidated signs, or necessary repairs due to collisions. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the attractions remain in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. This includes eligibility based on hours of operation, appropriate facilities for the activity, etc.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Americans with Disabilities Act

A commitment shall be made to comply with ADA accessibility requirements.
ADA Information Lines: 800-514-0301 (voice) 800-514-0383 (TDD)

The Transportation Cabinet shall not be responsible for business lost due to signs or information panels becoming temporarily out of service.